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DEMOCRATIC POLICY COMMITTEE

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4904

March 4, 2003

The Honorable
John Warner
Chairman
Senate Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable
Carl Levin
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Warner and Senator Levin:


I write to express my opposition to provisions in the President's fiscal year 2004 budget request that would seriously damage the Impact Aid program. As you know, this program provides funding to compensate local school districts for a "substantial and continuing financial burden" caused by federal activities, and is intended to compensate the districts for the loss of tax revenue resulting from federal land ownership or education of "federally connected" children whose parents do not pay property taxes in the school district, such as military personnel who are stationed outside of their states of residence.

I am troubled that the President's budget request would slash funding for this vital program by 12.6 percent. In addition, some 900,000 children whose parents do not live on or work at a federal installation would be disqualified from this program. As the country braces for a possible war with Iraq and continues the fight against terrorism, we are asking our military personnel and their families to make enormous sacrifices for our country. This is not the time to cut funding that helps to educate the children of our men and women in uniform. We should not be sending our military personnel into a hostile situation with the worry that their children will not be provided with adequate funding for their education. And we should not disqualify children simply because their parents do not live or work on federal property.

As you are well aware, many of our states are in dire financial circumstances. To cut Impact Aid funding now would be a double blow to already struggling school districts. This funding, along with federal funding for other education programs, is vital in these uncertain economic times.

I urge you to reject the President's proposed changes to Impact Aid and to continue to support adequate funding for this program.

Sincerely,



Russell D. Feingold
United States Senator

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